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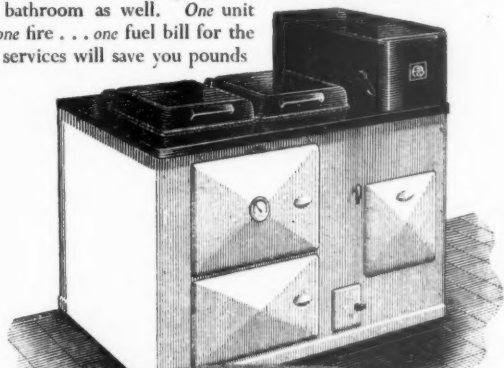


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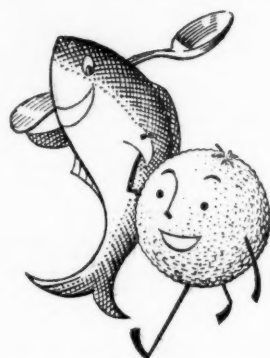
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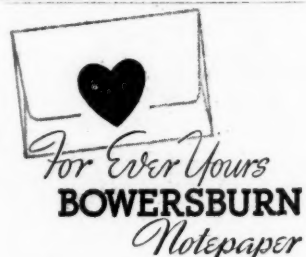


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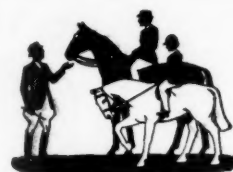
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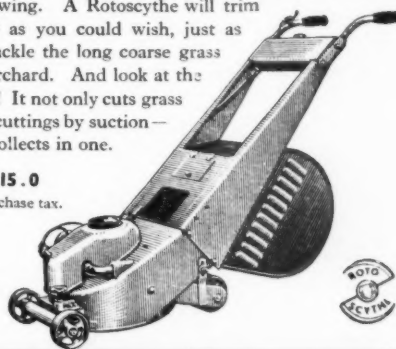
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PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIV No. 5592

February 25 1948

Charivaria

It is thought that many people who did not trouble to vote when the present Government was elected may decide to vote next time for a change.

"People who endlessly try to get the last laugh should be rounded up and dumped on an island together," declares an essayist. Instead of in the nearest B.B.C. auditorium.



"Blacksmith required by gate-making firm. Able to weld an asset."—*Advt. in Bristol paper.*

What most people want is somebody who can melt away a liability.

Speaking on the radio, a traveller mentioned that very few men in Russia smoke cigars. The trouble is the smell tends to hang about those iron curtains.

An M.P. asserts that the new Electricity Boards will prove really far-sighted bodies. One or two of them are said to be already laying in candles.

Members of a golf club have decided to plant the entire course with potatoes. Now, they ask, will petrol be available to take them to their work?

A fancier points out that it is quite easy to make a dog beg if you have a bit of meat to tempt it with. Our butcher informs us that the same applies to housewives.

Oxford dons, concerned about the shortage of food at the University, are asking whether Oxford is to be known henceforward as the home of lost courses.

Hip Flask

"There is a lump on the outside of the top of the thigh-bone called the great decanter."—*Schoolgirl's First Aid exam. paper.*

A correspondent complains about the Government attempt to peg wages. He says they're obviously trying to take a rise out of us.

Members of an Essex Women's Institute had a competition to decide who could whistle the shrillest note. The winner disclosed that she had concentrated her thoughts on the current prices of everything.



Shortage of newsprint may mean even smaller dailies. A grim possibility is the four-paper page.

Short Story

"FAMILY UNITY BROKEN UP
Candidate's wife speaks at Tory meeting"
—*Kent Messenger.*

According to a news item, two rustlers who entered a South American theatre were arrested by the police. Over here they wouldn't even have had their paper bags confiscated.

GALLERY

PIT



The King Penguin

ON a desolate rock of the outer isles the lord of the penguins stood
 And he looked his last on the stormy blast and a world that was not good,
 For the Nicaraguan navy swept the rim of the icy seas
 And the Guatemalan flag flew high on the rude Antarctic breeze:
 And he folded his flippers about his breast and he murmured
 "Was it vain
 The fight for trade that the sea-dogs made with the towering ships of Spain?
 I have grown too old to be consoled, too old to shout hurrah
 At the threats of war from Ecuador and the sloops of Panama;
 Little by little they break away from the breed that gave me birth
 The lordliest Empire ever seen by the sun that tours the earth
 (For a Briton's hand upon British land as soon as his face was wet
 Would wave him on before he was gone, he had no time to set)

But now the Yugo-Slavian types can mock at the power I knew,
 And the Falkland gulls salute the hulls of the squadrons of Peru;
 I have seen the days when the guns would blaze and the whole sea surge with foam
 Or ever they let some alien set his foot on my island home.
 I have lived too long to see the wrong of a Patagonian peace
 Imposed on the grebe and the albatross and the kelp and the upland geese."
 He folded his flippers about his breast, and he paced his piece of rock,
 He saw the Bolivian admiral land and he could not stand the shock;
 He dived for ever beneath the waves, but as he plunged he said
 "I will not bow to a stranger's rule, I am English-born and bred,
 They have taken the splendour away from the world, and now they have laid their ban
 On the University graduate vote—and I was a Balliol man."
 EVOE.

Mars As We Know It

THE report that astronomers on Mount Locke, Texas, have seen green spots on Mars has given fresh impetus to the belief that some sort of allotment system is in operation on the planet. Anxious to scotch this snake I rang up the Royal Observatory at Greenwich and asked whether consideration had been given to the possibility that these green patches were cricket-fields. I was told that the Royal Observatory had moved to Hurstmonceux Castle, whereupon I rang Hurstmonceux, and the conversation proceeded by way of question and answer as follows.

Q. I am making an inquiry about these green spots in this morning's paper—

A. Did you wish to make a complaint?

Q. Not at this stage. In your view, does the rapid change of temperature, the known aridity and the low oxygen-content of the atmosphere preclude the possibility of life as we know it?

A. Are you inquiring about rooms?

Q. I am inquiring, in the first place, about the existence of vegetable life on the planet Mars. It will be time enough later on—

A. This is the Hurstmonceux Arms Hotel.

Q. I see. In that case will you kindly ask the Exchange to put me through to the Castle?

A. Gladly.

Q. (later) Is that the Astronomer Royal?

A. No.

Q. Very well. An eighty-two inch telescope has recently been directed at the planet Mars, which as lately as February 16th was at Right Ascension at 2100 hours 19 minutes with a Declination of 16° 8' degrees.

A. You have been looking at last year's Almanack.

Q. The point is immaterial. What are the chances that an even larger telescope may have been directed at the same time from the planet Mars towards the planet Earth—

A. Nil.

Q. Kindly wait until I have finished my question before

answering it. Assuming that a telescope of immense power was in fact trained upon the earth at the material time, is it not possible that our own telescope might have been apparent to Martian observers and might reasonably be mistaken for an eighty-two inch gun, with undesirable repercussions?

A. There is no evidence of the existence of life as we know it on the planet Mars.

Q. You have heard of the theory that Mars is in fact inhabited by green men with their eyes on stalks?

A. Yes.

Q. Very well then.

A. Men with their eyes on stalks would be incapable of making effective observations through telescopes.

Q. You mean telescopes as we know them?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you incapable of imagining telescopes as we don't know them?

A. Yes.

Q. In that case perhaps you will be so good as to put me through to Sir Harold Spencer Jones.

A. The Astronomer Royal is engaged, until three o'clock at the earliest.

Q. Do you mean three o'clock by Hurstmonceux Mean Time?

A. We seem to be getting rather a long way from Mars.

Q. According to last year's Almanack—but I dare say you have the figures at your end. One more question. If you were on the planet Mars with an eighty-two inch telescope, what coloured spots would you expect to see on the planet Earth?

A. In the absence of observed data—

Q. None of that. Would the Hindu Kush appear purple, as on maps?

A. Questions of atmospheric density, terrestrial as well as—

Q. Or supposing you saw a patch of white and red in



TROUBLE IN THE FALKLANDS

"H'm, trippers, I presume."

the Antarctic with a white star in a blue square in the top left-hand corner, would you say that it was decaying vegetable matter? Or would you deduce that life as you knew it was flying some sort of kite in those parts?

A. Is that a serious question?

Q. Not very. The belief in a beautiful white queen, ruling over Viridia, or the Martian Green Belt, is still widespread on the planet Earth. Her subjects are said to be reddish in colour and capable of leaping immense distances, particularly when threatened by the Sloth-Men of South Martia. Would you care to make a statement about the size of telescope required to show up this queen as a white spot on a reddish background?

A. The night temperature in the Martian tropics is about -130°F .

Q. You mean her tiny hand would be frozen?

A. I mean that we are interested in facts here, not fiction.

Q. Would it interest you to know that Martian astronomers believe Wimbledon to be a patch of lichen inhabited in the torrid season by pure white queens, incapable of leaping more than forty or fifty feet in the air?

A. No, sir. It would not.

Q. Well, then, suppose a Martian observer were to catch sight of the two pink spots which I calculate should be visible about now on your cheeks, would he be justified in deducing that you had lost your temper?

There being no answer to this question, the conversation ended.
H. F. E.

A Likely Story

"Of course," said the Commander, "nothing is easier than to write a best-selling thriller."

We were sitting in a corner of the Residents' Lounge of the Mammoth Hotel in Liverpool; the hour was nearly midnight, and the room was deserted except for the three of us—the Commander, Eustace Platfoot, and myself—and an unobtrusively dressed stranger who was sipping a glass of lager at the next table. The talk had reached a stage where everyone would have liked to go to bed but no one felt quite capable of the effort of getting up. There was a perceptible pause before Eustace asked the Commander how one wrote best-selling thrillers.

"There are several methods," said the Commander, "but the simplest has been described by John Buchan—who of course used it himself—in *The Three Hostages*. McGillivray—or was it Medina?—pointed out that it was only necessary to choose three or four conspicuously unrelated examples of the bizarre, make up a connection between them, and there you have your thriller."

"Nothing could be easier, I agree," said Eustace, "provided of course one possessed the faculty of writing like John Buchan. The invention of out-of-the-way themes would not be difficult; in fact it would be rather amusing."

"For instance," went on the Commander, "you could have a one-eyed tarboosh-designer selling carpets at 3 A.M. at the corner of Trafalgar Square; a retired Brazilian barrister sitting in the stern of a sailing dinghy in Scapa Flow and filling in *The Times* crossword with a splinter dipped in his own blood; and the President of the Stockholm Rotary Club wheeling a

petrol-driven lawn-mower up Ludgate Hill."

"Alternatively," interposed Eustace, "one might devise the eventual correlation of some such triad as a Portuguese admiral diving fully clothed into the Manchester Ship Canal to retrieve a cigarette-end; the Mayor of Ashby-de-la-Zouche shooting the pips from the Five of Hearts in a Venezuelan gambling-hell; and four Madrid bull-ring attendants cornering the Chicago wheat market."



"We must apologize for the fact that, owing to a slight break in transmission, listeners heard bong bong bong bong bong bong bong, instead of bong bong bong bong bong bong bong bong bong."

"To go further," I interposed, "why not have, say, the Bishop of Bath and Wells diving for oysters off Trinidad on Christmas morning; a Russian chess-master cycling blindfold from Albuquerque to Las Vegas in a bright-green bathing-costume; and seventy-one Air Chief Marshals assembling by moonlight on Hampstead Heath to pick dandelions?"

At this point the man at the next table stood up. "You will, I hope, excuse my intervening, gentlemen," he said, "but there is one very good objection to any of the incidents you suggest being used as fiction."

"And what is the objection, sir?" asked the Commander.

"Simply this," said the stranger, "that every one of those situations, to my own knowledge, actually occurred."

He nodded a good night and strolled off towards the stairs. As he went he passed the sleepy-eyed waiter who had for some time been hovering around with an eye on the electric-light switch.

"Good-night, John," said the stranger.

"Good-night, Mr. Ripley," said the waiter.

We rose with one accord and crossed the lounge, the Commander leading. "Waiter," he exclaimed, "was that gentleman really Mr. Ripley?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Robert L. Ripley, the American?"

"Oh, no, sir. Mr. Ripley lives in Bolton. He comes here on business for his firm—Chorlton, Hardy and Co., the boot-makers. Good-night, sir."

"There's something funny about this," said the Commander as we walked up the stairs.

"Not funny," said Eustace. "Bizarre."

Gaposis

IN the House of Commons the other day Mr. Attlee said "... we shall not let up in our efforts to make every person understand the position." By "position" he meant of course the lamentable state of Britain's trade, the yawning gap and the ruinous drain. Well, I admire the courage behind this undertaking, but I doubt whether Mr. Attlee realizes what he is up against.

It seems to me that the Government must decide—and soon—whether to go all out for economic recovery and let up in their efforts "to make every person understand the position," or to concentrate on informing everybody about the mess we are in and let the future go hang. They can't possibly tackle both jobs properly; the country hasn't sufficient resources. To find enough P.R.O.s for the big drive against economic ignorance would mean combing industry almost bare of manpower. We are oh, so stupid.

Only last week in an Oxford Street queue I heard this comment on inflation: "Yes, I'm glad they're coming back. I've never really liked these blue notes, have you? No, too cold-like, aren't they? Like living with steel furniture. Besides, the old green notes seemed to buy so much more. Jack says his union wouldn't agree to wage-freezing until Sir Stafford promised..."

Then there are the newspapers. The other day a leading article was complaining about the shortage of dates—"There were plenty of dates before the war, great slabs of dates in every fruiterer's shop. And there are plenty in Africa to-day. Send a ship to fetch them!" That was all.

An even more respectable journal welcomed the partial raising of the ban on foreign travel in these words: "... but at least there is to be an end to the ridiculous ruling that because dollars cannot be spared for A and B to take a holiday in New York, therefore C and D must not have francs for a fortnight in Paris... And one may hope that the line between available and non-available currencies will not be too rigidly drawn... If stay-at-homes may drink port, surely the more venturesome may visit Lisbon." A fortnight later, on the appearance of the White Paper on the balance of payments, the same authority blew up with, "By what yardstick can an overseas expenditure of £50 million on 'tourism' in 1947 be justified?"

I could go on and on. And so could you, well-informed reader.

In the circumstances, and after the most frightful struggle with my conscience, I have decided to publish—for what it is worth—my own Intelligent Man's Guide Thro' the Gap. If it succeeds the Government can get right back to the task of recovery: if it fails... but no, there can be no thought of failure. Let's go.

The drain on our reserves (all this *could* be in italics) is about £50 million a month. Our reserves, apart from the till-money we need as bankers to the Sterling Area, are worth about £300 million. As a nation we are over-spending by more than £1½ million every day, £1,000 every minute, say £17 a second. As individuals we are living beyond our means by as much as 5s. a week, 8½d. a day or 35d. a minute. These are nice round figures, though distorted a bit by lack of practice.

Let us say, then, that the average family of four is living on capital to the tune of one pound a week—which is no mere song. This is the amount by which our standard of living will suffer if or when the blow falls sometime in midsummer. And not any old pound that can be saved by cutting down on tobacco, football pools, and entertainment—this is a *real* pound, twenty shillingsworth of imported goods. Food.

I want to make your flesh creep. How'm I doin'?

Look at it this way. Our standard of living in Britain, as measured by average real wages, has improved steadily and without any major setbacks for hundreds of years. For a decline comparable to the one towards which we are now heading we have to go back to whenever it was the Romans left Britain. But let's stick to the last hundred years. How far back will our reduced standard take us? All aboard the Time Machine! Let the decades blend and blur...

Here's 1900. Will that do? No, according to my standard text-books *real* wages were nearly as high in 1900 as they were in the nineteen-thirties. Back again down the arches of the years... Ah, now this looks more like it—"... but in England tea and oatmeal or tea and bread were the rule. At the other meals... the English ate vast quantities of potatoes, beans, cabbage, brussels sprouts and turnips. Fresh vegetables were eaten in season; but meat and eggs were luxuries. Fish of the cheaper grades was a common article of consumption; meat-fats and (later) oleomargarine

were widely substituted for the expensive butter."

Does that sound like the latter half of 1948, d'you think? Or do "vast quantities" and "cheaper" disqualify the year 1860 for our purpose? Let us read a little more of S. B. Clough's and C. W. Cole's *Economic History of Europe* (Boston, 1941)—"With such food as this in his stomach and the humdrum garb... on his back, the worker was required to labor from twelve to sixteen hours a day... For pleasure or recreation workers had their churches... public houses. Once in a while they could afford to visit a race-track or an athletic match, and the price of a cheap book, an entertainment at a cheap theater, or a ride on a train."

Yes, the comparison is fair enough, I think. So don't forget to put your clocks back to 1860 or thereabouts on July 1st.

In this analysis I have ignored the effects of any aid we may receive from the Marshall Plan, and I have made no allowance (knowing the quality of modern laces) for any improvement arising from Britain's effort to keep her head above water by straining at her own shoe-strings. This is propaganda, remember, designed to help Mr. Attlee out of a fearful dilemma. I rest my case.

Any more for 1860? Any more for the maelstrom? Or am I going too far?
Hod.

o o

The Roof

HARK!
Rap! Tap! Tap!
There's hammering in the attic;
Rap! Tap! Tap!
There's hammering most emphatic.
Can it really be true
That our pleading, cajoling is ended?
Yes, it is true,
Is it not perfectly splendid?
The Roof,
At long, long last,
The Roof is being mended.

A. W. B.

o o

Short-Sighted Ambition Corner

"Miss Medway City, 18-year-old Barbara Spicer, of Broadway, Gillingham, Kent, who intends taking up the stage, has been appointed assistant stage-manager at Chatham Repertory Theatre."—*Evening paper.*

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

A MAN called on us the other day and, opening a suitcase, asked us to buy his wares. Secundus chose a vole and Junissimus plumped for a guinea-pig, but I felt too worried over not being able to get a cyclotron by hire-purchase to be able to concentrate on a new pet. However, he was a persistent salesman, was Jones Penny-feather, and nothing would make him go away. I tried bribery and I tried insults and I tried quietly manœuvring the scraper between his ankles, but to no avail. Finally I composed this Fragment, very slowly and deliberately, a tactic that has never failed before; but after listening to me with wrapt attention he said he had not had such an intellectual treat since someone lent him the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and out of gratitude loosed a free ferret past me into the hall.

HOW TO TELL THE AGE OF A HORSE WITHOUT USING LOGARITHMS.

(The scene is a Palmist's Palmistry.)

MR. HOBB. Good morning, I've just popped in to have my fortune told.

MADAME MESSALINA. Your line of life confirms that.

MR. HOBB. I won't waste your time if you don't waste mine. Answers to three questions, please, as quick as you can: Shall I sell Plushwear Incorporated, is Aberdeen a place to retire to and how can I avoid meeting a Dark Woman?

MADAME MESSALINA. Yes. No. Live in Sweden. Half a guinea, please.

MR. HOBB. Thanks. Here's ten shillings, discount for cash. *[Exit]*

MADAME MESSALINA. How surprised he would be if he knew he was going to end his days keeping a temperance hotel in Basra.

Enter the goddess APHRODITE in a tailor-made.

APHRODITE. You have a crystal ball? Go gaze in it.

MADAME MESSALINA. I generally use tea-leaves about this time in the morning; but if you want the crystal specially I'm quite ready to oblige. Mmmm. The mist clears. I see you emerging from the briny. I don't quite recognize the place... Frinton? Now the scene changes. Amateur theatricals, no doubt. Mmmm. Well, well, dearie me...

APHRODITE. Peace, prattler. *[Exit stalking]*

MADAME MESSALINA. What an odd woman! No fee, too, but that last bit in the crystal made up for it. Where's the paper? Wednesday, "Beware of being instigated by others. An unexpected revelation of turpitude in

a friend may shake your trust in human nature. Do not go bicycling with your heirs." *(Enter a client.)*

I'm afraid you will have to remove your gloves, sir.

VANCE HYLER. Oh, dear. It's such a job to get them off. They told me snake-skin was the *dernier cri*. One likes to take something new home to the country. Oh, I see what it is; they've left some of the fangs in. There you are.

MADAME MESSALINA. It's not too easy as the pattern has overprinted your lifeline. Mmmm. You do not live in London.

VANCE HYLER. I don't think that's very clever. You can see by the blue clay on my boots. Tell me what I was like when I was three. I want some raw material for my autobiography.

MADAME MESSALINA. I can't help that. My strong point is the future. I see you reading a document containing the figures 57892.

VANCE HYLER. That's not my future, it's my past. It's the Elementary Maths paper in Matric, so good morning. Can you recommend a good phrenologist?

MADAME MESSALINA. Not until the good phrenologist has recommended me. *[Exit VANCE HYLER]*

Enter a POLITICAL CANVASSER.

CANVASSER. May I have your vote for Mr. Rice?

MADAME MESSALINA. If it's the tennis-club committee, I've already promised to support Willy Fan Travis.

CANVASSER. Oh, no. It's the by-election, for Parliament, you know. You must have seen the posters.

MADAME MESSALINA. I was so immunized against advertisements by my English mistress at school that I no longer even notice them. Anyway, I don't vote.

CANVASSER. You are entitled to. You are on the Register.

MADAME MESSALINA. Mother was a suffragette: I am reacting against her. That's what makes me so womanly. Chuck your palm across and I'll read it free. Mmmm. Do you find bigamy fun?

CANVASSER. Really! I am a bachelor of bachelors.

MADAME MESSALINA. Well, you must have had your palm lifted. Here it is, plain as plainsong, bigamy in the past, some kind of sex-war in the future. They gang up together against you early in 1953.

CANVASSER. It's all a terrible mistake.

MADAME MESSALINA. Yes, you try that one on the judge, but he comes back with something I can't quite read about sowing and reaping. Your side wins the election, though.

CANVASSER. Much I care! *[Exit]*

MADAME MESSALINA. Well! I try to be interesting, and not even a thank you!

Enter a PEERESS, rampant.

PEERESS. Why did you tell my husband that he needed an ampler life?

MADAME MESSALINA. I cannot of course remember him. My clients are as the sands of the sea, which makes things difficult. However, no doubt my advice was well-grounded and kindly meant. Possibly an examination of your own hand would turn surmise to certainty—and really, my dear, a puce aura with that hat!

PEERESS. Faugh!

MADAME MESSALINA. Spell it.

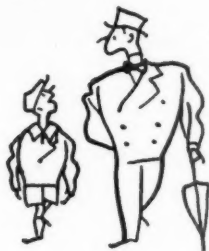
[Exit PEERESS, still rampant (Gazing into crystal). "Chez Maggie's" helpings look the best to-day. That settles lunch.]

FINIS

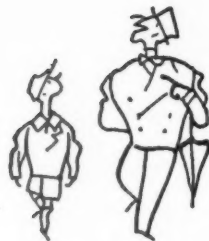


"What was the middle-class, daddy?"

Tringass



"What are the Olympic Games, father?"



"They are international athletic competitions, my son, open to all countries, with the object of stimulating mutual friendship and goodwill."



"How do they do that, father?"

Wainscot Waltzes

BEHIND the wainscots
Under the walls
There are lots and lots
Of dancing-halls
Connected by electric wires,
Hundreds of little floors
With seats for wood-lice choirs
And no doors.

And almost nightly
Some gay young mouse
Will foot it lightly
Through the whole house,
Whilst others, more discreet than he,
Sit round in chairs and beat
Pom-tiddle-pompetty
With their feet.

Bacon is roasted
On rusty nails,
Cheeses are toasted
In acorn-pails.

Then suddenly the dancers tire,
The audience silent grows
And each along his own wire
Homeward goes.

Now the bell-wires twist
From wall to wall
And a mouse who missed
His step would fall.
And foolish mice, who frivol on
From dusk to early morn,
Find their poise and balance gone
Towards dawn.

So that as they skip
Back to their beds
Many of them trip
And knock their heads,
Which would not matter much to me
If only, as they fell,
They did not constantly
Ring my bell.

O. D.



"By bringing together representatives of all nations, my son, in friendly rivalry, free from ulterior motives, and all inspired with one single, simple aim."



"What aim is that, father?"

Proof Positive

THE majority is always wrong." An absorbing topic, Forsythe, and one that allows infinite rhetorical scope. And I may say with all due modesty that, although my audience was hard to convince, by the end of the meeting I had won their absolute approbation.

Not that it was easy, Forsythe. But the subject has long been one of my studies and one upon which I can really drive every trace of a point home and make it tell forcibly. At the start of the discussion I received only

half-hearted support and more than an undercurrent of malicious scepticism, but as I warmed to my subject I had every man present hanging upon my words.

Yes, Forsythe, I completely won them over. And when, as is the custom at our discussions, the chairman called for a show of hands to indicate the feeling of those present, I was proud, Forsythe, to observe that practically every man supported my views. My majority was overwhelming, Forsythe. Overwhelming.



"To beat the pants off everybody else, my son."



"It's simple really—too many cattle chasing too few wives."

One-and-Nine

FOR those who, like myself, have been obliged from the pressure of economic circumstances to cut down their cinema-going to once a week it is essential that the Saturday afternoon choice should be made after careful and scientific consideration. My own method may perhaps be worth explaining for the assistance of others.

In Munton-on-Sea we have two cinemas, the Splendide and the Magnifique. This week the Splendide has a film called *The Loves of Gwenda Gushing* and this is supported by the comedians Gravel and Gallstone in an old thing called *Navy Daze* which I saw in Egypt in 1942 and have no wish to see again. The Magnifique has a film called *Matchikotcha* with full supporting programme, which at the Magnifique always means just the news, an advertisement film, and yards and yards of Coming Shortly.

In deciding how to lay out my one-and-ninepence to the best advantage I have evolved a points system, which works as follows:

(a) Two points for the most comfortable cinema. The Splendide easily gets these two points, as the seats were re-upholstered in 1935, while the Magnifique has not been done since 1927.

(b) Two points for how far back you can sit for one-and-nine. Here the Magnifique wins. There are a mere three rows of shillings at the Splendide, with only nine rows of one-and-nines, which means that the farthest back you can get for one-and-nine is the twelfth row. At the Magnifique the aristocracy (two-and-three) have only the four back rows, leaving no fewer than twenty-five rows, for the deserving poor. Score so far, two all.

(c) Two points for subject-matter of main film. Although the main film at the Splendide is called *The Loves of Gwenda Gushing* in order to deceive the sentimental into thinking that they will get a basinful of sex, it is actually a highly respectable story about two farmers, a

man and a woman, who go bankrupt on adjoining farms for years and are eventually driven to matrimony by an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. *Matchikotcha*, so-called to attract the people who like films with a Balkan flavour, is really the life-story of a prize sow in the Middle West. No points to either side.

(d) Two points for Stars. Grubble Swagger and Ginta Ginter are the stars at the Splendide. I have seen them much too often to award them any points. The prize sow in the other film is a newcomer and would thus get two points if she were not supported by Squibs Fulsome, who wears a big white hat and plays a concertina. One point to the Magnifique, giving them a three to two lead.

(e) One point for supporting programme. *Navy Daze* does not really deserve a point, but I always think it mean of the Magnifique to give only two hours for one-and-ninepence, so I award half a point to the Splendide for at least trying. Score so far: Splendide two and a half, Magnifique three.

(f) Two points for favourable press notices. I have before me the reviews of both films by the critic who writes in my Sunday paper. It is quite hard work finding out what he thinks of either film, because nine-tenths of his review always consists of dissertations on Communism, Chinese pottery, or something equally remote from celluloid, and he rarely mentions the film he is reviewing until the last few lines. Of *The Loves of Gwenda Gushing* he merely says that it has not the stark realism of similar Continental work by Blododski, and as I do not like Continental work and have never heard of Blododski this is not much help. Of *Matchikotcha* he says "pure ham," but whether this is meant as a compliment or otherwise to the prize sow I cannot guess. My other favourite critic, who is always infallibly wrong, is the barmaid at the Crown. She says that the film at the Magnifique is "gorgeous and a perfect scream," so I award two points to the Splendide. Final score: Splendide four and a half, Magnifique three.

I notice, however, that it has started to rain. Perhaps after all I would do better to stay at home and smoke a chain of ten cigarettes and save a penny. D. H. B.

Sporting Notes from Paris

THE recent victory of the French Rugger fifteen over the almost invincible Wallabies has caused the conversation at Mme. Boulot's to revolve almost exclusively round *Le Sport*.

It took me most of one evening to convince M. Jules that an Australian was not an Englishman, but my efforts were largely wasted—and my stocks even lower—because M. Jules and his friends are perfectly well aware of what the Wallabies did to us at Twickenham.

Preserving my *sang-froid*, I laughingly told an attentive audience the story of how, when I was much younger, I used to play against a Marseilles side called "L'Olympique." This side was chiefly remarkable for the fact that when it came on to the field it consisted of never less than seventeen and sometimes eighteen players, and play was invariably held up while the referee concentrated on reducing the team to fifteen. The surplus two or three players then retired to the touch-line in perfect good-humour, frequently joining the game by about half-time. Anyway, my side never won.



"You people seem to forget there are specially bombed car-parks provided for the purpose."

M. Jules said it was bizarre that my side had never thought of bringing on twenty or more players, to which piece of logic I could think of no adequate reply.

M. Jean-Jacques said that an *équipe de football* should not in any case consist of more than eleven or, exceptionally, twelve men, and refused to accept my figures. It took M. Albert and M. Jules ten minutes, supported by a threat from Mme. Boulot to telephone the gendarmerie, to reduce him to silence.

Disregarding the wintry atmosphere inside and outside Mme. Boulot's, M. Albert then told us of his visit to London in the summer of 1933. Like a good foreigner, he decided to visit the Houses of Parliament, but was unable to convey his wishes to the taxi-driver. Finally he said *Le Lords*.

The taxi-driver removed an overcoat and took M. Albert to the Law Courts. M. Albert was politely interested, but felt something was wrong: *le Big Ben*, for one thing, was not visible. So he again said *Le Lords*, a little more loudly.

Shedding another overcoat and saying something under his breath which M. Albert took to be a reference to the number of foreigners then in London, the taxi-driver headed for Baker Street and St. John's Wood.

M. Albert says that *Le Lords* was not at all what he had been led to expect. There was a clock, it was true, but it was the wrong shape: and he was astonished to find *Les Lords* attired in long white trousers and holding their session in a field. There was no resemblance at all to the *Chambre des Députés*, where even if members sometimes became a little violent they did not, so far as M. Albert knew, hurl a ball at one another or defend their persons with bits of wood.

M. Albert came away with the impression, formed from listening to the comments of his fellow-spectators, that the top man, or *Chef*, in the House of Lords was called Good Old Wally. He was moreover faintly puzzled by some of the expressions used by the spectators in commenting on the debate.

He was grateful for my explanation of the misunderstanding, though his attention seemed to wander towards its close. I think, however, this is the right place for me to append a brief list of cricket terms translated by myself for M. Albert's guidance:

A square cut: *une coupe carrée*.

Square leg: *jambe carrée*.

Leg break: *jambe cassée*.

A glance to fine leg: *un regard à belle jambe*. (This expression interested M. Albert particularly.)

Concealed delivery: *bal masqué*.

The bowler: *le bowler*.

The batsman: *le batman*.

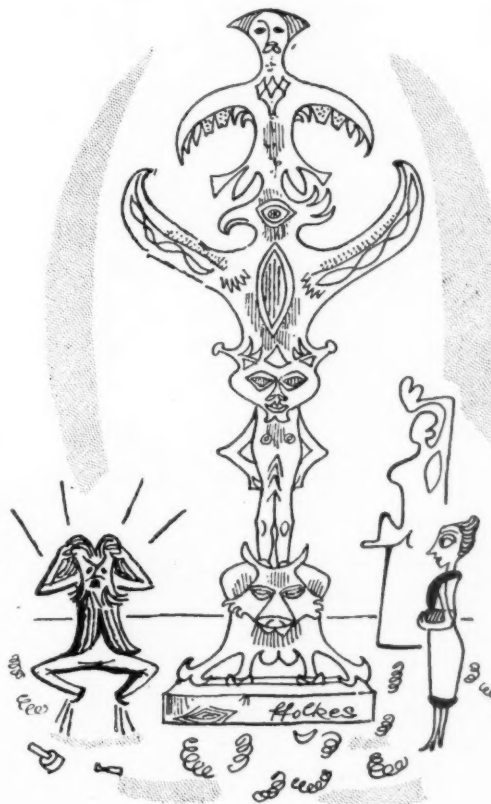
In the deep: *dans la profondeur*.

On-drive: *sur promenade*.

Off-drive: no translation available, but M. Albert said he did not mind.

Out for a duck: *dehors pour un canard*.

I cannot for the moment think of any more cricket terms, but I hope that the above list will prove of value to the countless people who are sure to find themselves discussing cricket next summer with French citizens.



"Do you mean to say it's been done before?"



"'Freak Magnetic Storm'—the papers'll 'ave it this evening."

Ballade of Feminine Repudiation

FOR scores of lovelies I have wanly pined
 With sighs untold and many a secret tear,
 Yet never guessed to what should be assigned
 The long disasters of my warm career;
 But now, in phrase majestic and austere,
 The candid nymphs have spoken their decree;
 The charge is uttered, my offence stands clear.
 They tell me I am not their cup of tea.

Their cup of tea, they say, is wise and kind,
 Exempt from greed, and free from pride or fear;
 Their cup of tea is courteous and refined,
 Industrious, handsome, talented, sincere.
 "Then, lo!" say I, "your cup of tea is here."
 They answer no, they cannot quite agree.
 They say I am but negligible beer;
 They tell me I am not their cup of tea.

How foolish now, how blind and worse than
 blind,
 My hopeful little gallantries appear!
 I weave long tales to charm Neera's mind,
 I breathe low ditties in Miranda's ear;
 I ask to be their knightly Bedivere,
 Their certain lodestar over life's rough sea,
 Their guard, their guide, their buckler and their
 spear:
 They tell me I am not their cup of tea.

Envoi

Prince, if you hold your ease and comfort
 dear,
 Then come you nigh no party flung by me.
 I may inebriate, but I cannot cheer.
 They tell me I am not their cup of tea.

M. H. L.



THE PATIENT'S DILEMMA

"Can't you bend a little in front?"

MONDAY, February 16th.

—Before the Question-hour ended Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL arrived in the House of Commons, bearing a big, locked dispatch case. This, with some clatter, he proceeded to unlock and unpack on the table. He then gathered up his papers and went for a little stroll up and down the front Opposition Bench, before settling down to a cosy chat with those about him. All this by-play vastly interested the galleries, and vastly puzzled the Government supporters, comparatively few of whom had seen Mr. C. in action in war-time and could not, therefore, recognize the infallible signs of storms to come.

But the rest of us (who *could* read the signs) sat waiting with anticipation—of one sort or another. We were not disappointed. But of that more anon.

Even before the debate began a sample storm, so to say, had been delivered to Mr. Speaker, as official representative of the whole House.

Complaint had been raised that Sir WILLIAM DARLING had, while in America, made some comments judged to be disparaging to Britain. This, said the complainant, was most improper. And, added another complainant, would it not be a good thing to lay it down that such action was against Parliamentary etiquette?

Mr. Speaker replied that it would *not*, and added, reasonably enough, that broadcasts delivered in Britain knew no frontiers. If the suggested rule were applied, it might disqualify vigorous broadcasts such as that delivered by Mr. CHURCHILL on the previous Saturday. This remark was received with some laughter, and Mr. CHURCHILL (who patently did not share in the amusement) was up in a moment with a demand to know just *why* Mr. Speaker had "dragged" him into the matter. Mr. Speaker replied that he had merely used him as an illustration—a remark that did not noticeably pacify the Leader of the Opposition. But there the incident ended.

Mr. CHUTER EDE, the Home Secretary, then moved the Second Reading of the Representation of the People Bill, which will reduce the size of the House from six hundred and forty to six hundred and eight, abolish the "business vote" and University representation, wipe out the City of London as a separate Parliamentary constituency, and redraw most of the other constituency boundaries.

But before we got to this, there was a picturesque and colourful reminder

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, February 16th.—House of Commons: Giants Clash.

Tuesday, February 17th.—House of Commons: Representation of the People.

Wednesday, February 18th.—House of Lords: The Atomic Age. House of Commons: Local Government.

Thursday, February 19th.—House of Commons: Local Government Once More.

that the City of London has traditions and rights of its own, even in these austere and utilitarian days.

There was a brief but extremely efficient, parade of the Parliamentary Home Guard. Or perhaps an Old Comrades' Reunion. For, to the Bar there strode Sergeant Leslie Boyce, of that distinguished corps, accompanied by Mr. R. Christmas Hammett, Junior Sheriff of the City of London, and Sir Leslie Bowker, the City Remembrancer. All were resplendent in robes,



Impressions of Parliamentarians

35. Mr. Skeffington (Lewisham, West)

the Sergeant (now Senior Sheriff Sir Leslie Boyce) and Mr. Hammett in scarlet and sable, lace and gold badges, the other Sir Leslie in black, with full-bottomed wig. With the Serjeant-at-Arms, Sir Charles Howard, in command, they stood smartly in a single rank—a perfect "column of threes." When Mr. Speaker inquired politely "what they had there," the Senior Sheriff announced that he had a petition against the proposed swamping of the City of London as an individual constituency. Then he stood rigidly to attention while his old Home Guard C.O., Major Edward Fellowes, stepped from his place as Second Clerk Assistant of the House and marched smartly down to collect the document, which he delivered to the correct address.

Then Mr. RALPH ASSHETON, senior Member for the City, essayed to "move" that the "salient parts" of the petition be read. Mr. Speaker (who is never puzzled by Parliamentary drill) corrected this, *sotto voce*, to "request," and Sir Gilbert Campion, the Clerk of the House, gave what used to be called a "select reading" from the document—which may become historic.

When Mr. EDE came to move the Second Reading of the Bill, he justified the elimination of the City on the ground that it now had only some four thousand six hundred residents, who (the "business vote" being doomed) would alone be entitled to vote. As for the University seats—well, they were a sign of privilege, or something, and ought not to be retained. So, centuries of tradition notwithstanding, they were to go, the whole lot of them, so far as the House was concerned.

Mr. CHURCHILL was, all this time, metaphorically pulling pins from his store of figurative hand-grenades. The moment Mr. EDE was down, *he* was up. He ironically congratulated the Home Secretary on playing out time (some seventy-five minutes of it) by the simple expedient of reading a good deal of the voluminous Bill and then a goodly part of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. There was a considerable element of poetic licence in this description of the speech, but Mr. EDE led the laughter.

But then Mr. CHURCHILL got rough, and mentioned that the Government had broken faith by departing from the Parliamentary reform plans agreed by an all-Party Conference under Mr. Speaker's chairmanship. It was true, he conceded, that no Parliament could bind another—each Parliament could behave like a gentleman or a cad, honestly or like a crook. Every Parliament was free, for instance, "to repudiate pledges in regard to Savings Certificates . . ."

There was an angry roar of booing from the Government benches, but Mr. CHURCHILL waited patiently for it to die down, and went on calmly ". . . though it would not be advisable to do it."

A little later, first Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, then Mr. ARTHUR WOODBURN, the Scottish Secretary, and, finally, Mr. ATTLEE, himself, were up with sharp contradictions of Mr. CHURCHILL's statements. These left him unperturbed, and he continued his attack, which reached its climax with



"Seventeen per cent. say the world is round, sixty-four per cent. say it's flat and nineteen don't know."

the statement that, the Government having destroyed (or at least breached) the understanding that one Parliament did not normally wreck another's work, he reserved the right to restore the franchise to the Universities and to the City of London when, once more, his Party had control.

The rest of the debate was undistinguished, except for a certain bad-temper which showed itself too often, and it was adjourned until

TUESDAY, February 17th, when, Mr. WOODBURN and Mr. MORRISON having had their say, there was a division and the Bill was given a Second Reading by 318 votes to 6.

But before the vote was taken (at the demand of the Liberals, which explained the smallness of the minority figure) much eloquence flowed under the bridges. Mr. OSBERT Peake, for instance, said that the Bill, if unaltered, would be for ever a stain on the escutcheon of the Labour Party, and Sir DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE presented the case for the prosecution against the Bill.

Then it was Mr. MORRISON's turn, and excellent use he made of it. He said Mr. CHURCHILL had given the

impression that he (Mr. M.) had spent all his time, in the war, looking after Party interests, but that really was not so . . .

"You played," agreed Mr. CHURCHILL, with a little bow to his war-time Home Secretary, "a gallant part!"

Mr. MORRISON blushed with pleasure, and the whole House cheered a typical piece of Churchillian chivalry.

But concessions were off the menu for the evening, and Mr. MORRISON (having expressed some grief that there was to be no division forced by the Conservatives) sat down. Then Mr. Speaker put the motion for the Second Reading of the Bill, and the Liberals performed their Casabianca act.

WEDNESDAY, February 18th.—

While the Commons argued about block grants and similar adjuncts of local government, their Lordships were talking of atom bombs. The Archbishop of YORK pressed the Government to say what it proposed to do to meet the grim possibilities, and Lord HANKEY suggested that the bomb's secret should be left to the Americans, rather than be handed to the United Nations. Lord CHERWELL was not

impressed by the effectiveness of international "bans" on the use of the bomb.

But Lord PAKENHAM only spoke wistfully of the need for "light on dark places"—he made it clear that they were in the Soviet sphere of influence.

Packed neatly amidst the written replies to questions in *Hansard*, Members were intrigued to find information for which they had long sought. It was a detailed statement of the salaries paid to the heads of the nationalized industries. And it showed (on your scribe's reckoning) that the thirteen heads will draw over £83,000 in salaries and expenses, and that most of them will receive sums substantially greater than those paid to Cabinet Ministers. And the total to be paid to all the "directors" will be £352,850—£161,500 going to the heads of the British Electricity Authority.

THURSDAY, February 19th.—The intricacies of local government claimed the attention of the Commons once more, and, as yesterday, those who did not wish to speak found work in other parts of the building. It gave the debating chamber a prairie-like aspect.



"It's the food problem, doctor—this constant worry of wondering what on earth my wife's going to concoct for my evening meal."

The Cosmic Mess

NOT for the first time, this column has practically given up smoking for ever. That is to say, for two days it has smoked nothing at all in the day-time, and only one imperceptible cigar in the evening. So far, the campaign has run completely true to precedent. This column's winter cold, which began in a heat-wave on September 2nd and has ever since been attributed by the world to excessive smoking, is almost laughably worse than it was. The nose is blown at about twice the former rate of frequency: and this morning, at the first blow, the nose bled, a thing that has never happened before. The sore tongue, which was, as much, perhaps, as the "menacing gap", the prime cause of the campaign, seems to be as sore as ever: and new and alarming sorenesses have appeared *under* the tongue, where there were none before.

This column, once more, has to record an utter failure to co-operate by the medical profession. Whatever the harsh world, whatever unfeeling relatives may say, this column has never been able to persuade a doctor that any of its misfortunes are due to smoking. "It is an acid condition", they say, and offer it a cigar. It went to its excellent dentist about the tongue. In the old days, if you went to a dentist with a sore tongue, he was delighted and took a couple of teeth out; he would make holes in two or three more and "fill" them, and scrape and polish the rest till they were almost invisible. But the profession seems to have lost its nerve. He said the trouble had nothing to do with teeth: and the contribution of tobacco, if any, he judged, was negligible. This column gave him the "acidity" cue, which he eagerly accepted. He did not, to this column's surprise, offer it a

cigar, but he gave it some jolly alkaline tablets and recommended a doctor who knew about acids.

Then this column went to see its favourite chemist, who said much the same thing. "Smoking?" he said, "I wouldn't be afraid of that. Get rid of that acidity." This column then bought various Enemies of Acidity, things to suck, and things to swallow; things to wash the mouth with and things to wash the stomach (which, by the way, is an unusually good and efficient stomach) with. The first mouth-wash seemed pretty powerful, and may have been erroneously prepared. At all events new inflammatory areas appeared in various parts of the mouth; and a tooth or two fell from the upper denture. The dentist, by the way, gave this column a special warning against sucking penicillin tablets, which will give you, he said, the sorest tongue you ever had.

Indeed, as between penicillin-sucking and permanent smoking, he seemed to think that, for savaging a tongue, penicillin would win the prize every time. And the same evening this column heard about an old friend who had been treated with penicillin for something or other, and has now, poor chap, swollen up all over. Whether he gave up smoking, too, was not related, but it all goes to show how careful we should be.

All this talk of Acidity, by the way, this column is inclined to resent. It has always regarded itself as having an unusually alkaline nature, in normal conditions: indeed, it is only conscious of acidity when it gives up smoking. Nevertheless, it doggedly devotes itself to the Battle of Acidity. Unfaithful even to its favourite chemist, it creeps into other pharmacies and hopefully searches for anti-acid preparations which it may have missed. At meals it does its best to eschew the acid. At a City dinner last night, whenever a waiter approached, it said: "Is this dish acid or alkali?" If the reply was "Acid, sir", it said "Take it away, please, and bring me some alkaline sustenance". If the reply was "Alkali, sir", it asked for a double portion. Once again the medical profession deplorably failed to co-operate: for a distinguished surgeon, who sat next to this column, kept saying that the whole Theory of Acidity was nonsense. Indeed, he said, if it wasn't for acid, we should all have cancer of the stomach. So now, where are we? Liquid refreshment, too, is a worry. For, whenever this column decides to have a virtuous drink, instead of the one it wants, it finds that it is letting down the Alkali Drive. Virtuous beer, they say, is a mass of acid: while wicked spirits are not. It is all very difficult.

Then, of course, there is the psychological side of the affair. If you want to study the dark recesses of human nature, do not read the Russians or go to see films of low-life—just take a peep into the mind of a man who has just given up smoking. With what arrogant unChristian contempt he regards the whole degrading, insanitary habit, those who yield to it, and those who for private gain exploit it. This column shudders when it passes a tobacconist and thinks of all the good money it has wasted on such places. It looks with odious pity, or detestable gloating, at the smokers about it, all doomed to go bankrupt and die of sore tongues, chronic coughs, or worse. It wonders bitterly that, at the present time, they do not realize that they are burning *dollars*—as well as tongues and

lungs. In the morning, when it dresses to go to the big city, it laughs maliciously to think how simple dressing is to-day. All those poor fools, it thinks, are at this moment worrying "Have I got *everything*? The tobacco-pouch (sufficiently charged)—the cigarette-case—the matches—the lighter—the pipe (no, two pipes, for one may break)—the pipe-cleaners?" They are studding their clothes with ugly bulges, so that their wives despair of their appearance and say they are ruining the new coat. But this column is dressed in a second or two, with no such worries, and goes forth showing a slim figure and a perfect line. Uncountable readers, this is a dark moment in the history of any column. For is there at the same time any compensatory calm of the spirit, any noble glow of repose, which one could set against the unfraternal motions of the mind? So far, uncountable readers, there is not. There is only a sense of vinegary frustration, a hysterical rage, an uncontrollable itch, a venomous dislike for the human race. And all this horror, you see, comes from giving up smoking. There is much to be said, this column is sure, for not starting smoking; but the case for giving it up has still to be proved.

* * * * *

"By the way," said this column shyly, about the time of the Interim (Anti-Inflation) Budget, "does any of this make sense?" Very tentatively, and absolutely "off the record", in an unofficial whisper, this column would like to repeat those words. Here is that unwearied Titan, Sir Stafford Cripps, going all out for "price reduction": "Where", says he, "there are many imminent demands for wage increases . . . the best way to damp down those demands is to arrest and reverse the increasing cost of living."

But, dash it, fellow-columns, it is only a few months ago that the Interim Budget deliberately *increased* the cost of living by putting up the Purchase Tax on everything, not to mention the duties on wines and spirits. Noting with its amateurish eye how wide was the area of increase, this column cautiously suggested that the Budget might perhaps be more prothan anti-inflationary in effect. It inquired what would happen if the citizens, undeterred by the higher taxes, continued to buy medicines, tooth-brushes, wireless-sets, and bottles of whisky. The answer seems at last to have occurred to the Treasury. They find that they have not, as everyone tells them, "too much money". They have not enough: and

they ask for more. This column has received the same remuneration for years and years and has never thought of asking for more. But if the taxes on whisky and alkaline preparations are increased again, it will have to. Now, perhaps, we shall see these taxes reduced. Or not?

This column, by the way, was highly flattered to see in *The Spectator* a very kindly correction of its unskilled opinions by no less a person than A. C. Pigou, once Professor of Political Economy at Cambridge University. The Professor, at some length, explained what was *really* meant by "inflation"; and this column respectfully read what he wrote several times. It has to report with regret that its mind is no clearer than it was: and many better and wiser columns have said the same. It hopes that the Professor will try again, with special reference (a) to the Interim Budget and (b) to the new "drive" to reduce prices.

A. P. H.

My Railways

ONE and a quarter million trucks:
It sounds very large and fine,
But only a bit of a wheel or so
Is really mine.

Fifty-two thousand miles of track:

But I'm only a part trustee,
And a fraction less than an inch of it
Belongs to me.

Restaurant sandwiches, horse-drawn
vans,

Platforms all posy-grown:
But only a crumb, a hoof, a leaf,
Are mine alone.

Forty-eight million part trustees,

And each to have his due . . .
Can it be wondered I get no seat
To Waterloo? J. B. B.

Tramp, Splash, Whirr, Tramp, Tramp

"The British can march to it, across the seas and the skies, to the farthest ends of the earth."—*Editorial in evening paper.*

Impending Apology

"Today, under its permanent conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham, new music and new musicians are encouraged as vigorously as of old and the programmes reach an ever wider and more responsive audience through the agony of broadcasting."

Newfoundland paper.

At the Play

All This is Ended (ST. JAMES'S)—*The Vigil* (EMBASSY)—*A Comedy of Good and Evil* (ARTS)

THESE three plays are all concerned, in their several and widely differing ways, with the border-line between this world and the next. The first, in fact, is over the border, for in *All This is*

themselves were killed in 1917. In the second act the men try unsuccessfully to persuade the padre to let one of them return to earth as their joint representative, so that he can use his influence

to stop another war. In the third, the padre's resistance to the men's proposal is successfully overcome when the discovery is made that there is one more recruit than was expected; and now the question is, which shall go back? Shall it be the self-important captain from H.Q., the ardent idealist, the nice young American, the German prisoner, the little Cockney half-crazy about the girl he has let down? Finally they draw for it and, the idealist winning, he tries to make the Cockney go instead; but the padre rules this gesture out of order.

It is a sincere and quite dramatic play. It has restraint and humour. The men are life-size, though this may hardly be the adjective to use. And there is much to be said for the writing, the acting, and Mr. BASIL DEAN's careful production. Yet when it was over I felt Mr. ALLDRIDGE had missed his opportunity. Imaginatively everything is in reverse. The men react only to the past. And since there can be few left on earth without a practical knowledge of what war means, the significance of *Benny's* return, unarmed so far as I could see with any special powers of warning, is difficult to follow. Mr. HECTOR ROSS plays him very well. Mr. ANDRE MORELL's calm *Padre* is admirable, Mr. RUSSELL WATERS contributes a heartening sketch of the tea-brewing wag who is the mainspring of all armies, and Mr. WILLIAM FOX's cynical correspondent,

though clearly from the more picturesque end of Fleet Street, is effective. In fact the whole draft is that.

The Vigil at the Embassy is a play by Mr. LADISLAS FODOR which has made a great stir in America. I doubt if it will do so here, but the public verdict will be interesting. Considering that it deals with the Resurrection, through the medium of an "American" court case in which the gardener at the grave is indicted for body-snatching by a prosecution anxious to disprove the miracle, it is remarkably reverent, and several scenes, notably the interrogation of Mary Magdalen, are moving in a simple way. But is there really any point in reducing such a subject to the easy, theatrical terms of another of those brow-beating legal dramas of which we have surely had our fill? Or in translating Pilate into a blasé Governor-General in white ducks, and Joseph of Arimathea into a smooth company promoter? Some will say the means are justified because they bring reality to the struggle for Christ's vindication at the time. They may be right, but to me the play is something of a stunt, not cheap exactly but not worth while. Mr. ANTHONY HAWTREY's handling of it is adroit, and the acting of a large cast is in most cases worthy of the West End. Mr. DOUGLASS MONTGOMERY and Mr. BARRY K. BARNES support the main burden creditably as the Machiavellian prosecutor and the dispassionate counsel for the defence, and Miss DIANA CHURCHILL's *Mary Magdalen* is a strong and sympathetic performance.

There is some fine stuff in Mr. RICHARD HUGHES's moral frolic, *A Comedy of Good and Evil*, revived at the Arts, but the jest of a Satanic imp, looking like a fairy yet burning with selfless devilry, who is adopted by a simple Welsh parson and his wife doesn't fill out three acts. The honest old man's bewilderment is diverting, and so is the social embarrassment suffered by his wife in the substitution for her wooden leg of a real one full of high-kicking rebellion; but it is the kind of diversion better suited to a one-act play. Miss VIVIENNE BENNETT's production is leisurely. The third act is weakened by the absence of the parson, except for his voice, filtering sepulchrally from the next world. Mr. HUGH GRIFFITH plays him with all his rich sense of character, Miss DIANA MORGAN gives a lively account of the leg, and Miss HILDA SCHRODER represents the nether fryer with the hard brightness of a Sunday-school prodigy. ERIC.



[*All This is Ended*]

IN THE HEREAFTER: "WHO SAYS TEA?"

Lester Ratcliffe	MR. WILLIAM FOX
Benny	MR. HECTOR ROSS
William	MR. MEADOWS WHITE
The Padre	MR. ANDRE MORELL
Chalky	MR. RUSSELL WATERS

Ended, at the St. James's, everybody is dead. Mr. JACK ALLDRIDGE has borrowed the Outward Bound idea and applied it to the latest war. It takes a little time for the soldiers streaming into a villa in Italy dazed and exhausted from the battle raging outside to realize what has happened. Tea and cigarettes still taste good, and the sergeant-major who receives the men does so in a style which, though a shade outmoded, is in accordance with the best traditions of the British Army. Each has a common gap in memory, however, and doubt is ended when a major arrives whom some of them have seen killed. That is the first act. The villa is a transit camp for soldiers passing on, the padre and the sergeant-major being volunteers who stayed behind to run it when they

men are life-size, though this may hardly be the adjective to use. And there is much to be said for the writing, the acting, and Mr. BASIL DEAN's careful production. Yet when it was over I felt Mr. ALLDRIDGE had missed his opportunity. Imaginatively everything is in reverse. The men react only to the past. And since there can be few left on earth without a practical knowledge of what war means, the significance of *Benny's* return, unarmed so far as I could see with any special powers of warning, is difficult to follow. Mr. HECTOR ROSS plays him very well. Mr. ANDRE MORELL's calm *Padre* is admirable, Mr. RUSSELL WATERS contributes a heartening sketch of the tea-brewing wag who is the mainspring of all armies, and Mr. WILLIAM FOX's cynical correspondent,



"Lucky for you, sir, that you weren't down this way LAST winter!"



"'Fun with the Figure Fairies' is nothing—wait till you get on to 'Happy Hours in Numberland.'"

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Stefan Zweig

Stefan Zweig, the Austrian novelist and biographer, committed suicide in South America in 1942. A wealthy Austrian Jew, he ripened quickly in the Indian summer of the æsthetic age, acquiring a considerable reputation in Vienna even before the first war. His books reflected the current intellectual fashions; they were the products of a highly cultivated man of letters, not of an original mind, and the sentiment in which they abounded had a literary and factitious flavour. Although Mrs. FRIDERIKE ZWEIG is devoted to her husband's memory, her life of *Stefan Zweig* (W. H. ALLEN, 12/6) does little to modify the impression his work gives of a cultured dilettante who exhausted his finer feelings in the labour of putting them on paper. They met shortly before the first world-war, and though, as Madame ZWEIG says, he seemed to be not at all melancholy, but on the contrary to be well pleased with the gifts showered on him by life, she felt a sudden pity for him. A photograph of her at this time shows her to have been not only beautiful but sympathetic, with a strong maternal element which responded instinctively to Zweig's desire to be protected against external shocks. After steering him safely through the first world-war and sharing his subsequent vicissitudes during many years, she relinquished him to the care of a younger wife, who did not, however, possess the necessary physical stamina to encourage him to support his life as an exile in South America.

H. K.

A Dinner of Herbs

The stalled ox—unless you take him figuratively—is so rare a phenomenon nowadays that his scriptural opposite number should come in for more grateful consideration.

No one has done more to popularize herbs, both pleasant and unpleasant, than Mrs. C. F. LEYEL, whose *Herbal Delights* and *Compassionate Herbs* are now followed by *Elixirs of Life* (FABER, 16/-). The new batch are subdivided into nutritious herbs, bitter herbs and tonic herbs; the two last classes, as every child knows, having a tendency to overlap. The nutritious group are of immediate practical interest; and, as the author's selection is both native and foreign, it is perhaps a mistake to list so many unobtainable exotics and oust even one native substitute. Agar-agar, for instance, the Chinese sea-weed used for edible birds' nests, heads the list with all its names, habitats properties and a recipe for its use. Carrageen moss, its nourishing and palatable Irish understudy, is omitted. Rampion, which breaks so charmingly into a peal of blue-bells when its green salad days are over, is recommended only for its root. But dozens of newcomers and old friends, described in expert detail, make up for a few omissions; and Miss MILDRED ELDRIDGE's illustrations have grace, precision and the energy proper to growing plants.

H. P. E.

His Heart's in the Highlands.

The reputation of Dr. F. FRASER DARLING as a biologist, naturalist, and—fusing qualification—humanist is rock-sure. In *Natural History in the Highlands and Islands* he builds on that bed-rock the most important and impressive survey of his special subject yet written. The scope of the book takes in the geological, geographical, bird and animal aspects of a country unique in Europe to this day for its unspoilt "naturalness." Loch and mountain, crag, burn, moss, sea island, moor, corrie, estuary and hard-won croft alike come under his close, accurate, illuminating and understanding glance. "Glance" is the wrong word, save superficially. Rather this book conveys to our glance the results of single-minded study; which, indeed, is in a sense its fault, for it is a book for the earnest naturalist, profoundly interested, as is the author, in the subject; and, when Dr. FRASER has this in mind his pages are deeply interesting to such a student; but from time to time he tries to persuade himself that he is "popularizing" his theme, loses his grip, and pleases neither the random amateur nor the real student. Both alike, however, cannot fail to be enchanted by the superb natural colour and black-and-white photographs. The index is a model of sparsely copious reference; and the whole book a publishing triumph for Messrs. COLLINS, who market a classic textbook in these difficult days for sixteen shillings.

R. C. S.

Pierre Laval

The Unpublished Diary of Pierre Laval (THE FALCON PRESS, 12/6) is a well-planned and vigorously written defence of Laval's public life from the fall of France till his arrest by the Germans and removal to Germany in August 1944. In an appendix is given the Act of Accusation which summarizes the charges brought by his own country against Laval; and the general impression left by this book is that the truth concerning Laval lies about midway between the Act of Accusation and the prisoner's defence. The points which Laval establishes beyond reasonable doubt are that his desire for an alliance with Italy before the war was not due to sympathy with Fascism but to anxiety to keep Hitler within bounds; that, after the French collapse, he felt himself more qualified than any of his fellow politicians to bargain and negotiate with Hitler; that, unlike Darnand, Doriot and other French enthusiasts for Nazism, he had no emotional bias towards

totalitarian ideas and methods; and that he devoted all his native and acquired cunning, pertinacity and toughness to evading or holding up the enemy's demands on his country. To do his best for France in a position which also enabled him to do his best for himself had always been Laval's guiding principle, and he did not deviate from it during the war. The real charge against him was that he was not Clemenceau. Nor were a good many others, but someone had to be shot for it. H. K.

The Old Buddha

A woman who assumes a man's rôle usually regrets it—and her world usually regrets it too. Signor DANIELE VARE's classic life of the last great Asiatic despot takes on a particularly Asiatic and particularly despotic cast because the despot is a woman. For China, like Scotland, "went with a lass"; and the ominous rule of *The Last of the Empresses* (MURRAY, 9/6)—one intelligent woman almost inevitably surrounded by a pack of effete men—assumes, under a profound and sympathetic knowledge of its facts and circumstances, a faint aura of Fotheringay. Not that an Italian Ambassador, with a fifth of a cycle of Cathay behind him, is likely to have any illusions about "the old Buddha." Able, beautiful, ambitious, ruthless—because only her own ruthlessness could counter the ruthlessness of her foes—Yehonala, to use her tribal Manchurian name, played her own cards and as many as she comprehended of China's. How few these latter could be, given her hierarchical isolation, and how quickly the rules of the game were changing under Western impact, the author is concerned in fairness to show. An intimate love of China, evident on every page, has been offset by a successful effort to be just both to China's *femme fatale* and "the passing from the old China to the new." H. P. E.

Prisoners and Captives

"I traded one dinner-dress, price U.S. ninety-eight dollars, for six aspirin tablets when George had a toothache." George (then three years old) is the son of Mrs. AGNES KEITH, author of *Three Came Home* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 12/6), and the barter she describes took place in the Kuching prison camp. Her book, written on scraps of paper that were hidden in the child's stuffed toys and buried in tins and medicine bottles, tells of three and a half years' imprisonment by the Japanese, first on Berhala Island, and then at Kuching. The author's husband was interned too, but she only saw him occasionally, either as a concession or surreptitiously and at the risk of life; so rumours of his maltreatment added to all the other horrors that had to be endured. She shows us human nature at its best and worst—"How we women hated each other on Berhala." Yet every extra scrap of smuggled food was divided by these women with complete fairness, and nearly all of it went to the children. The Japanese practised or allowed the most loathsome brutality, but some showed unexpected streaks of kindness—"They were as the war made them, not as God did." It is a story of valour, torture (the author had ribs broken by kicking when she was being "questioned"), starvation and sickness; yet, though it makes crude reading and is raggedly written, the flashes of humour, absence of self-pity and comments on life's true values raise it above the level of many books about human endurance. Mrs. KEITH does not spare us any horrors, but she gives even the devil his due, and makes us thankful that she, her husband and little son were liberated in time. B. E. B.

The Lucky Dick

If you laughed at Damon Runyon you will probably laugh at *P. Moran, Operative* (GOLLANCZ, 8/6), which Mr. PERCIVAL WILDE has written with a similar inversion of the stately rhythms of the American tongue; and you will find it difficult not to like a hero of such indefatigable innocence as Pete Moran, chauffeur, amateur sleuth and lady-killer. He is taking a correspondence course in detection, and the book consists in his reports on the episodes in which he is embroiled and in the staccato telegrams which come back from the academy. Pete is vain, illiterate and plausible, and it is no wonder his reputation grows in the village of Surrey, Connecticut (pop. 1,800), for however dark the designs of the toughs against whom he pits his hard-won learning he always triumphs by virtue of an impregnable boneheadedness. The whole feeling of the thing is pleasantly idiotic, and such paragraphs as the following abound: "So he sits, and I says, 'You may proceed,' which is what it says in regular detective stories with regular detectives and a dead corps and maybe some inspectors from Shetland Yard." The pick of this bunch is undoubtedly "*P. Moran, Diamond-Hunter*," in which Pete is assisted by the hired girl, who is reading literature in college and tries out the methods of all the leading crime-writers in turn, Agatha Christie winning. E. O. D. K.

"English Masters of Black-and-White" is a new series published by ART AND TECHNIQS at 8/6. The first three titles are devoted to the 'sixties and 'seventies of last century, dealing with *George Cruickshank*, *Richard Doyle* and *Sir John Tenniel*. Each volume contains a critical introduction, outlining the life and achievements of its subject, but the main feature is the reproduction of the best or best-known examples of the artist's work. The two last-named books contain many drawings from *Punch* and some interesting notes on the relations of Doyle and Tenniel with this paper.



"Like to buy a drop of real Scotch?"



"Eureka!"

A Journalist Remembers.

XVII

IT was well known in the office of *The Plough* that there was little love lost between Mr. McGargle, the editor, and his rival, Hamish McQumpha, of *The Soil*. I discovered the fact for myself, shortly after I joined the paper, when I happened to repeat McQumpha's claim that when he took over *The Sculptor's Chronicle* he had doubled its circulation overnight.

"On the day in question," said Mr. McGargle sharply, "six copies of the paper were sold. That on the next this figure was doubled I can well believe, since I happened to see McQumpha himself setting off with a bundle of *Chronicles* and a life-preserver. A year later I myself reorganized the paper as *The Soil*, flinging it, along with McQumpha and its parsimonious proprietor, Angus Ardrossan, on to the crest of the wave of agricultural journalism which was sweeping the country from end to end. What was the result? A large circulation, unbolstered by bludgeonings." It was clear that I had touched on a sore point, and I said no more.

McQumpha himself seemed to take a perverse delight in aggravating Mr. McGargle's dislike, and whenever they met he would be sure to make some offensive remark. One such encounter took place on an occasion when Mr. McGargle and myself had paid a visit to a tavern in order to celebrate Milton's birthday. As the waiter approached our table Mr. McGargle whipped out a pocket copy of *Paradise Lost* and became engrossed in its contents. At the same moment I heard McQumpha say loudly, "I am willing to wager that McGargle has saved more out of *Paradise Lost* than Milton ever made!" Mr. McGargle turned crimson with annoyance and, after a moment's silence, replied in a voice of thunder "That's as may be!" The words were brought out with tremendous energy and reinforced by a blow upon the table which made the glasses rock and ring, but I could not help feeling that the retort lacked point and sting. The fact was that Mr. McGargle, pen in hand, was a formidable antagonist, but a certain

natural irascibility combined with mental reactions ponderous and massive rather than nimble to place him at a disadvantage in a verbal encounter. It was with mixed feelings, therefore, that I heard that he was to engage in a public debate with McQumpha on the motion "That Edgar Allan Poe is the farmer's writer *par excellence*."

I had once heard McQumpha debate with Lady Gripple, of Loam, the respective merits of Buff Orpington and Plymouth Rock, and knew him for a witty and forceful dialectician. On that occasion he had created a brilliant diversion by introducing the subject of the Yellow Peril, and while Lady Gripple was wrestling with some obscure question about the amount of pocket money allowed by the Grand Lama of Tibet to certain traditional attendants, he had launched an unexpected attack on the Buff Orpington's vulnerability to the disorder known as "scaly-leg." It was his habit to cry "Rubbish, rubbish!" while his opponent was speaking, and his frequent use of the phrase "As Lady Gripple knows perfectly well" seemed to annoy her not a little. As far as I knew, Mr. McGargle had never heard his opponent in debate, and I felt it my duty to tell him what I knew of McQumpha's methods.

"I propose," said Mr. McGargle, "to speak for half an hour or so on 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' and to furnish unanswerable proof, culled from the text, that Dupin's heart was never far from the hen-run. Then I shall turn to the poetry. I shall take my stand on the worms. I care only for the truth," he continued huskily, "and I have no doubt that it will prevail, but you must watch me closely during the debate, and if I blow my nose twice I want you to get up and shout 'Fire!' as loudly as possible."

I think I may venture to assert that among the large audience which packed the Agricultural Hall to hear the debate, none wished for Mr. McGargle's victory more fervently than I. Yet I must admit that my main anxiety was not for the outcome of the contest, but for the possibility that I might at any moment have to rise to my feet among a crowd of strangers and raise an alarm which I knew to be false. Such was my diffident and retiring disposition that had the fierce heat of Vesuvius burst out beneath my very chair I should still have been reluctant to draw attention to myself by making a violent outcry. The idea of shouting a dastardly fabrication at the top of my voice froze my very blood, yet I resisted the

impulse to fly from the hall, telling myself that I must stand by Mr. McGargle.

The debate opened in such a manner as to make me fear that my hateful duty might be forced upon me at any moment. Mr. McGargle rose to his feet and began, in a sonorous voice, "Although to the superficial observer apparently obsessed by the tomb—" "Rubbish, rubbish!" interjected McQumpha.

Mr. McGargle's face flushed angrily as he darted an indignant glance at his opponent. "Although to the superficial observer apparently obsessed by the tomb—" he repeated, and paused. A deathly silence fell. Mr. McGargle's eyes appeared to bulge as he stared vacantly before him, and his hand strayed uncertainly towards his trousers pocket. To my great relief, however, he pulled himself together and continued. His speech was well received, as was McQumpha's, and at last the orators prepared to engage in the cut and thrust of debate.

"I should like to urge," began Mr. McGargle smoothly, "that the introduction of the orang utan into 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' is an indication that Poe's roots were firmly entwined in the primeval earth. Though I dare say," he added, with a wintry smile at his opponent, "that Hamish will have some objection to make here."

"Poe's roots," replied McQumpha, "as Shippon knows perfectly well—" "As what!" ejaculated Mr. McGargle.

Some men, particularly those of austere and masterful disposition, are rarely addressed by Christian name or nickname. The author of *Paradise Lost*, for example, would probably have made but a frigid response to the affectionate "Milt" or "Jack," and we plumb the past in vain for "Bill" Wordsworth. Mr. McGargle was one of these, and I could see immediately that he was inarticulate with rage at what he evidently considered an unpardonable familiarity. In another moment he had pulled out his handkerchief, and I had risen to my feet, said "Fire," and sat down again. I should of course have shouted the word loudly, and remained standing, probably making vigorous gestures of some kind, but when the time came I found myself unable to do it. Some of the audience turned and looked at me curiously, but apart from this my action had no effect.

On the platform Mr. McGargle was blowing his nose with demoniacal energy as McQumpha challenged him triumphantly with questions about William Penn and his proneness to

bilious attacks. Setting my teeth, I rose up once more. "Fire!" I shouted desperately. I was told afterwards that though my voice was heard in all parts of the hall, no one knew what I had said, and I believe to this day that only those who have received a thorough training in elocution and voice production can raise such an alarm effectively. In the present case, the result of my effort was that I was immediately ejected from the hall by two powerful attendants. I had much ado, afterwards, in making my peace with Mr. McGargle, but I persuaded him at last that I had done my best, and it was not long before he relented.

o o
"Lot 67. Cigarette Lighter and Pocket Lens."—Auction sale catalogue.

If both fail, try rubbing two sticks together.

Aunt Maggie

YOU are very understanding,
Aunt Maggie,
You are very sweet,
My charming, discreet
Aunt Maggie.

You have led a long life and you know
its tricks.
There is no surprise
In your gentle eyes
At its tricks.

The shadows that lie between us are
very small.
Picasso and Bing,
Hemingway and swing,
That is all.

Dear Aunt Maggie! V. G.



"Miss Angelo is sorry she is feeling worse and cannot come to-day."

Loitering with Intent

"EXCUSE me, sir," he said, trotting along beside me, "would you listen to a original story what I've just made up? It's a scream, I think."

Now I have an extremely sympathetic ear which I am glad to incline to such cases, provided always that I am approached at the proper time. I throw in too a knowing nod and a somewhat downy cast of eye that heightens the general effect, but strangers must not expect all this when I am out on my constitutional. At a pounding four miles per hour the wielding of my umbrella demands all my attention, owing to the remarkable way in which my knees bend outwards when going at speed. (When Albert compared them to the hind legs of a frog, and brought one along to prove it, he was of course grossly exaggerating, though I had to concede some remote resemblance to quieten him.)

"It won't take a minute," he pleaded, pressing his palms together and doing a slight bow. "I want to see how it goes over."

"I am something of a raconteur myself," I said. "Of course everything depends on the way you tell them."

"Just try me out," he said with a nervous cough. "I'll stand about here. I think I've got it right."

I leaned on my umbrella while he cleared his throat.

"It's about three men—or two really, but I put a extra one in to give it a humorous twist. You'll laugh when you hear it."

"All this rambling does the thing no good," I said severely. "You need brevity and point—perfect timing. Now in my story—"

"Listen!" he cried, raising an agitated finger. "Let me tell it me own way. You can criticize it afterwards."

"Very well."

I waited in stony silence. He stood bowed in thought, his eyes closed, like Rodin's "Thinker" with a small cap and trembling moustache.

"It's gone," he confessed at last. "You've drove it clean out of me mind."

I plunged a forefinger into his top button-hole and twisted it into a secure grip. It is details like this that reveal the experienced raconteur.

"Let me give you a slight idea of how it should be done," I said, drawing him up genially. "Now in my story—"

"If you hadn't interrupted me I'd have remembered it," he protested, struggling ineffectively. "It was a good 'un, too."

"Quite," I said. "Now listen. H'm."

It was extraordinary—the thing had gone completely. I shook my head in exasperation. A tear came to his eye.

"Pity," I said, releasing him. "It's gone. I suppose we'd better leave it at that. Some other time, perhaps."

Now this story was on the tip of my tongue—it needed but a minute to recall it. I paused a few yards away in an attitude of melancholy abstraction. My friend had halted too, and was staring at the pavement, the toe of one boot raised in tense thought. I strolled back.

"No luck?" I murmured in passing.

"Not so far," he said, shading his brow with one hand. "It may come. I'm in a trend of thought."

I tiptoed a short distance and halted again, casting a musing eye on a near-by policeman. He cast one back. I returned in a hurry to my friend, who was now beating his palms together in an agony of exasperation. His cap had slipped over his eyes, but I had no time to stand on ceremony.

"It's clean gone," he said, as I raised his cap and peered under it.

"Never mind that now," I said. "A policeman is watching us. In fact he is approaching. If we stay here we shall be arrested for loitering with intent."

"Telling stories is no crime, is it?"

he exclaimed, bridling.

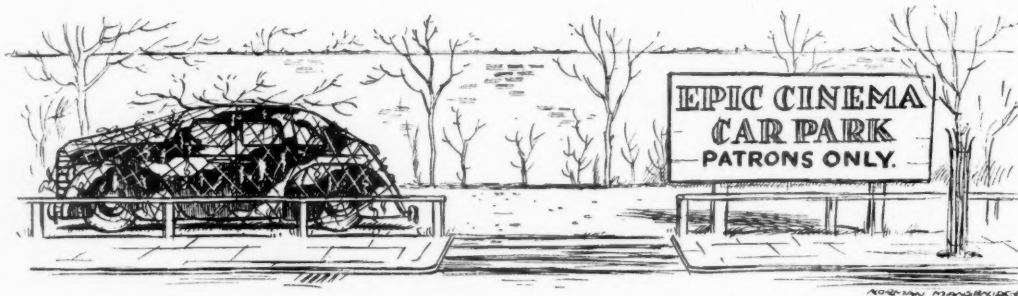
"That all depends," I said, giving him a very sharp look.

"I'll think of it in a minute," he said. "Give me time."

He repeated this request as the policeman joined him, but I was already speeding down the street. Then a remarkable thing happened.

As I have explained, at top speed my umbrella has an unfortunate way of impinging on my right kneecap, and on occasion leaping like a wild thing between my legs, owing to the peculiar action of my knees. I was also a little flustered and was picking myself up for the second time when I glanced back. Both my friend and the policeman were looking towards me. My friend had obviously just remembered and told his story, which must have been extremely droll, as they were both reeling with laughter.

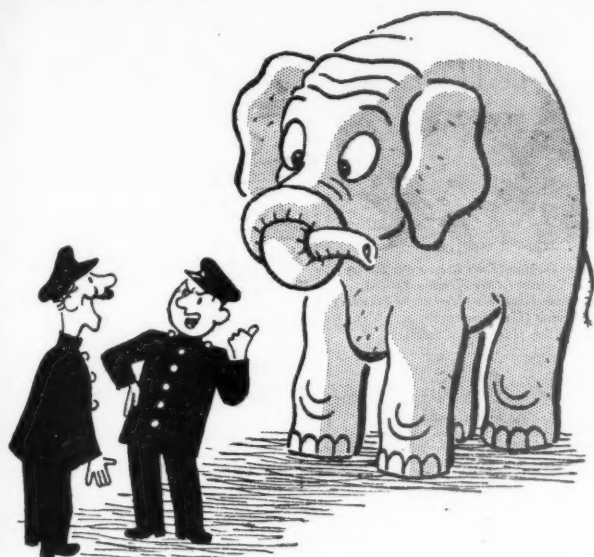
It made me wish that I could recall my own story. I know it was very funny, if the one I'm thinking of is the one I'm trying to think of. I laughed like anything at the time, whenever that was.



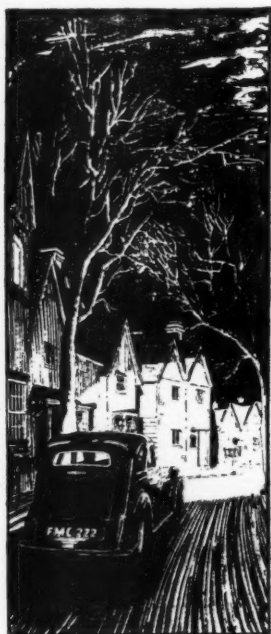
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his nose out of my Bovril"



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*Only the name is fictitious

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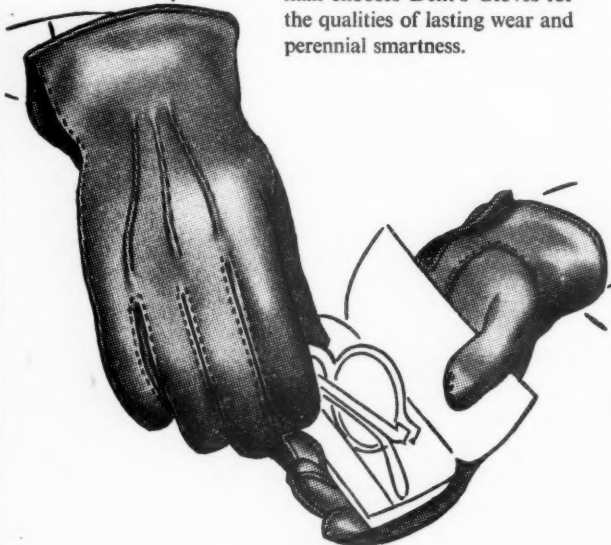
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Lilac Vegetal (After Shaving Lotion)
Pommade Hongroise (Moustache Fixative)
Tonicream (Hair Dressing)
Brilliantine (Liquid and Solid)

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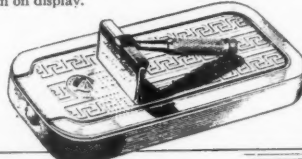


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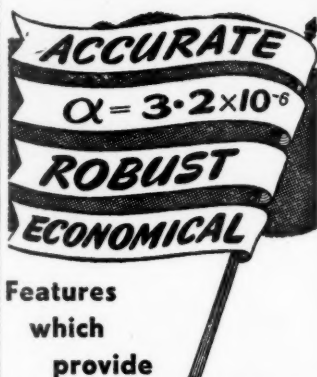
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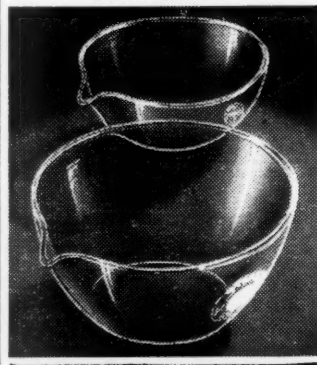
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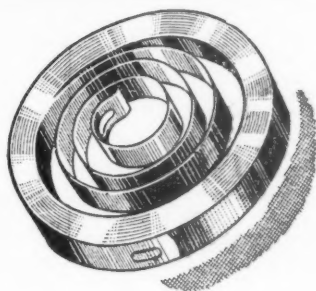
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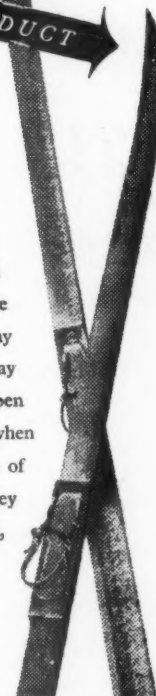
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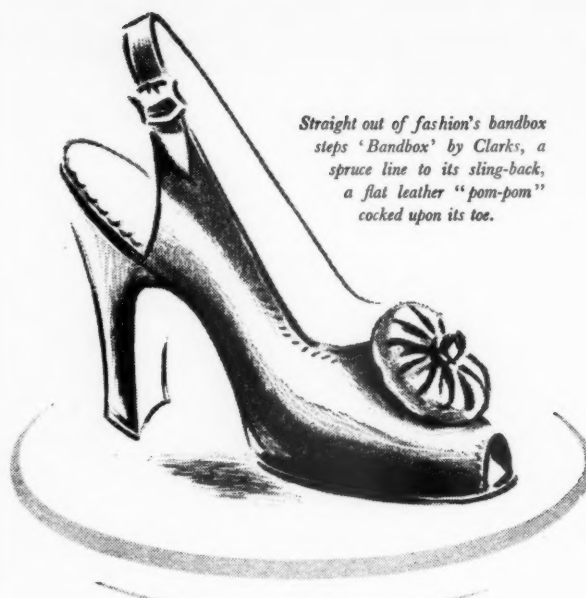
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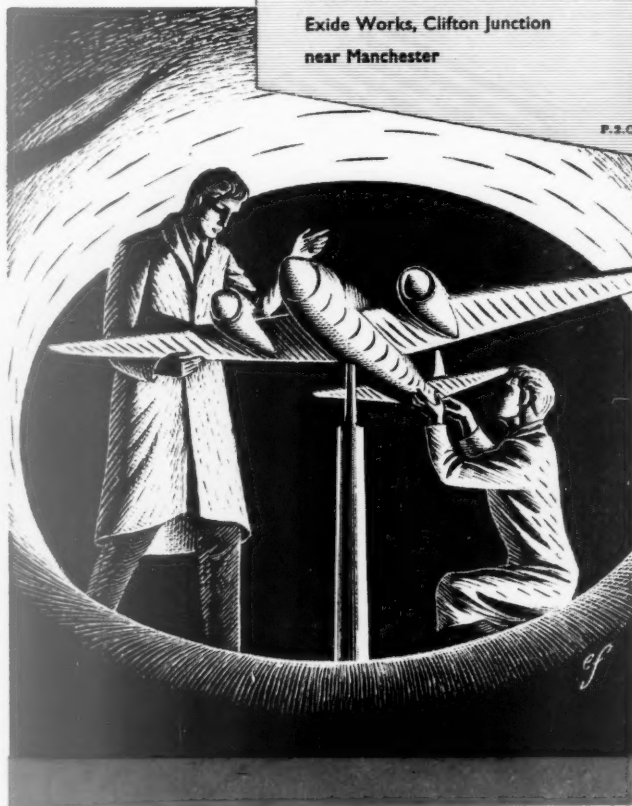
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